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Persons, Monks, Children, and Non-Persons¹

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Forward

This chapter is an attempt at developing a structural understanding of the medieval status, or *mibun* 身分, system. What initially stirred my interest in writing on such a topic was my reading of Minegishi Sumio's "*Nihon chūsei no mibun to kaikyū ni tsuite no oboegaki*,"² and the strong impression it had on me. Minegishi, with his accessible style and penchant for distilling complex concepts into clear diagrams, has always performed the exemplary role of clarifying the many confusions that emerge in our field. Perhaps more decisive, however, was the following incident: When, in the course of commenting on the presentation that had just been given by Hotate Michihisa at last year's conference hosted by the Historical Science Council (*Rekishi kagaku kyōgikai* 歴史科学協議会), I happened to point out two or three contentious points in Minegishi's models, Minegishi, who himself was presiding over the proceedings, chimed in with: "In that case, Mr. Kuroda, why don't you give it a shot?" In this way I was given a direct "challenge," so to speak.

The major points I had wanted to make eventually appeared on the pages of *Rekishi hyōron* with some revisions,³ but while writing them up I began to mull over the prospect of accepting Minegishi's challenge. Perhaps from the perspective of actual experts in subfield of status studies (*mibun-ron* 身分論) my efforts here and what argument I attempt to make will appear ill-advised, or perhaps

¹ This article is a translation of Chapter 9 of Kuroda Hideo's 黒田日出男, *Kyōkai no chūsei, shōchō no chūsei* 境界の中世・象徴の中世. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1986. In hopes of preserving the original historical value of this article, all dates mentioned by the author have been deliberately left unchanged. When Kuroda writes "last year," for example, readers must understand this to mean 1985, the year before this article was originally published.

² Minegishi Sumio 峰岸純夫, "Nihon chūsei no mibun to kaikyū ni tsuite no oboegaki" 日本中世の身分と階級についての覚書 in *Rekishi hyōron*, issue 376, 1981.

³ "Illustrated Picture Scrolls as Historical Documents and the Medieval Status System" Shiryō toshite no emaki-mono to chūsei mibun-sei, in *Rekishi hyōron*, issue 382, 1982.

even presumptuous. Nevertheless, taking cues of course from Minegishi regarding schematization and model-making, in the following I will do what I can to sketch a structural model of the medieval status system, after my own fashion.

In a previously published paper, Minegishi presents an illustrated model of the “Medieval Status System” (*Chūsei no mibun taikai* 中世の身分体系).⁴ Therein, he establishes two axes; the X-axis consists of an opposition between the fundamental members constituting the state (*kokka no kihon-teki seiin* 国家の基本的成員) and non-members (*hiseiin* 非成員) outside the system, while the Y-axis is organized by the opposition between the Secular or Worldly (*seken* 世間), that is, the world governed by karmic and social bonds (*en* 縁), and the Sacerdotal or Extra-Secular (*shusseken* 出世間), that is, a world without karmic or social bonds (*muen* 無縁). Within this framework, Minegishi divides medieval status into four categories: the Mundane (*zoku* 俗), the Lowly (*hi* 卑), the Holy (*sei* 聖), and the Abject (*sen* 賤). The “Mundane” status group encapsulates the overwhelming majority of the population, and is structured through class stratification, internally divided as it is between the ruling classes, such as the nobility or *samurai*, and the ruled. The “Lowly” status denotes indentured servants or slaves (*ge'nin* 下人 and *shojū* 所従), subject to their masters, whether the latter be aristocrats, *samurai*, commoners, or priests; in turn, these *ge'nin* and *shojū* are vouchsafed protection by virtue of this relationship of rule and subjugation (*shujū kankei* 主従関係), or class relations (*kaikyū kankei* 階級関係). The third category, the Holy, referring to priests and monks (*sōryō* 僧侶), is inhabited by those who by taking Buddhist vows have severed their ties with the world of attachments (*en*). The fourth, the Abject (*hi'nin*), has in common with servants and slaves its extra-systemic status, while sharing with monks and priests the characteristic of being “extra-social” (having no karmic or social bonds). This schematization is quite seductive, I must admit.

Nevertheless, I have doubts concerning the model's ability to grasp the theoretical principles informing status. My complaints are the following: Minegishi constructs his Y-axis through an opposition between the Secular (*seken*) and the Extra-Secular (*shusseken*), and from this derives the two status categories of the Mundane and the Holy. So far, so good. Against this, however, Minegishi posits a binary that is incommensurate with the former, and this is his opposition between “members of the state” and “non-members” along his X-axis; this choice I have great difficulty understanding. While the Y-axis is predicated on categories common in historical sources, and moreover neatly corresponds to the opposition between the Mundane (*zoku*) and the Holy (*sei*), the binary informing the X-axis is a theoretical one of Minegishi's own derivation, and thus is of an entirely different quality from that of the Y-axis. Furthermore, due to this organization of the X-axis, Minegishi's division of status categories into the four given—Mundane and Lowly, Holy and Abject—leaves the reader with the

⁴ Please refer to page 14 of Minegishi's paper.

unshakable impression of being somehow off-kilter or otherwise lacking in internal coherence.

I have several other reservations, but setting them aside for the time being, I would like to elaborate in what follows how precisely I envision the “medieval status system.”

1. Visual Markers of Status

First, I would like to direct the reader’s attention to **Figure 1**. This diagram appeared at the end of my paper, “Illustrated Picture Scrolls as Historical Documents and the Medieval Status System,” but as it is indispensable to my argument, I have reproduced it here.

In this figure, I have used visible or visual markers of status, in this case hair-style or headwear, to categorize the medieval population into four basic groups—“Children” (*warawa* 童), “Persons” (*bito* 人), “Monks” (*sōryō*), and “Non-Persons” (*hi’nin*). While the first category, that of Children or *warabe*, undergoes various transformations in hairstyle early in its cycle, beginning with the shearing of the baby’s head at birth (*sute-gami* 棄髪), its constituent members nevertheless do not belong to the world of Persons, or *bito*, which is symbolized by the *eboshi* cap 烏帽子 and top-knot (*motodori* 髻). “Children” are not “Persons,” and only become “Persons” after undergoing the coming-of-age ceremony (*gen-puku* 元服), at which point they very literally “become people” (*seijin suru* 成人する). The second category, that of Persons or *bito*, is the domain of rulers and the ruled, organized by the state system of court rank and appointments (*kan’i* 官位 and *kanshoku* 官職), the hierarchy of which is made manifest through visible markers of status, such as the crown (*kanmuri* 冠) or *eboshi*. This category corresponds more or less to the “Mundane” status in Minegishi’s rubric. Monks, or *sōryō*, the third category, is the domain of the sacred, symbolized by the shaved head (*bōzu-atama* 坊主頭). The fourth and final category, that of Non-Persons or *hi’nin*, comprises those various people seen as unclean (*fujōshi sareru* 不浄視される), with the figure of the leper—loathed as the most polluted (*mottomo kegareta* 最も穢れた) of beings—forming its absolute limit; they are organized as a status group visually through their lack of headwear and their unkempt, unbound hair (*hōhatsu* 蓬髪).⁵

As I discussed these four categories in my previous essay, I will refrain from elaborating any further, but would like to make two supplementary points.

The first relates to lepers (*raisha* 癩者) and the “heads of the lodge,” or *shukun no chōri* 宿の長吏, who were charged with managing the former. According to the

⁵ However, according to Kuroda Toshio’s 黒田俊雄 understanding, the status characteristics particular to *hi’nin* are that 1) they fall fundamentally outside the social and status systems, and thus are not in an indentured or enslaved state; 2) they are excluded from the means of production; 3) they are seen as unclean; see “Chūsei no mibun-sei to hisen kannen” 中世の身分制と卑賤観念, *Buraku mondai kenkyū*, 33, 1972.

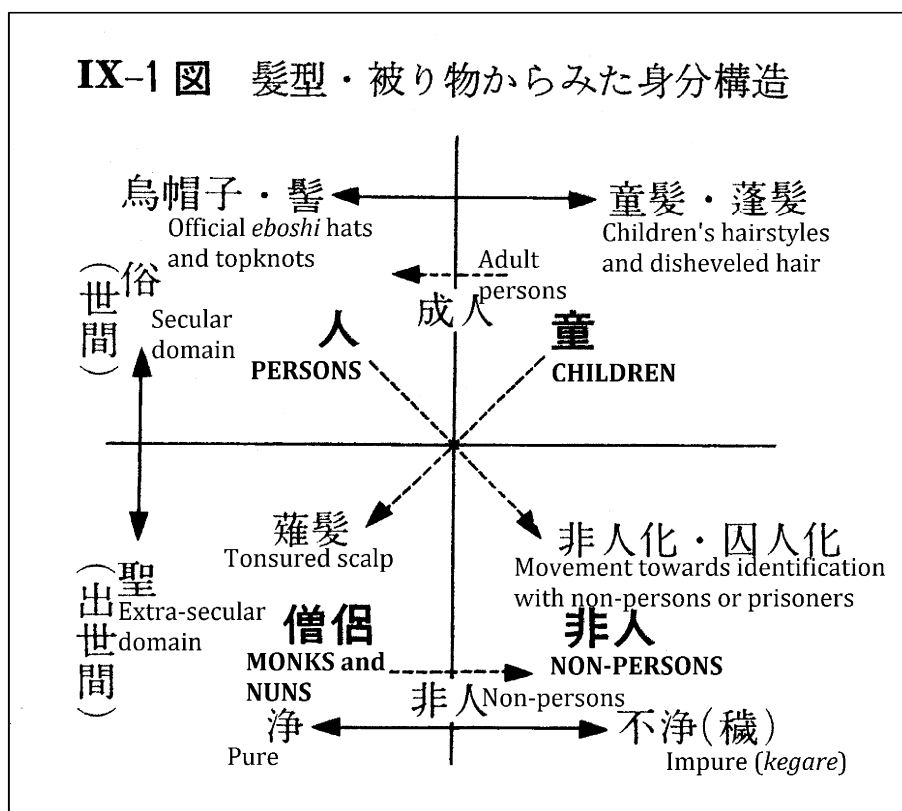


Figure 1. Social status as visually displayed through hairstyle and headwear.

Sankō Genpei seisuiiki 参考源平盛衰記 (Redacted Record of the Rise and Fall of the Genji and Taira) cited on page 169 of the second volume of *Emakimono ni yoru nihon jōmin seikatsu ebiki* 絵巻物による日本常民生活絵引 (Illustrated Index of the Life of the Common People of Japan through Illustrated Picture Scrolls), it is believed that lepers were required to wear white face-coverings and persimmon-colored garments similar in style to mourning wear (*chaku-i* 著衣). Indeed, examining the version of *Ippen-hijiri e* 一遍聖絵 (Ippen the Sage in Pictures) contained in the supplementary volume of *Nihon emaki-mono taisei* 日本絵巻物大成 (Compendium of Japanese Illustrated Picture Scrolls), one finds (on pages 141, 142, 167, 179, 196, 298, 312, and 330) what appear to be lepers, almost without exception depicted with white face-coverings and garments in a sort of persimmon-colour.⁶ However, the instance on page

⁶ I am aware that, when it comes to identifying and agreeing upon the colors found in illustrated picture scrolls, one encounters many complications—what lexical term is appropriate? What would the historical expression of a particular color be? I have referred to Nagasaki Seiki's 長崎盛輝 *Iro no Nihon-shi* 色の日本史 (Kyoto: Tankō Sensho, 1974), in which "persimmon-color" is described as "a yellow-orange dye resulting in a color similar to that of a ripened persimmon. Dye of this sort appears in the late Heian period, but in the Muromachi period, together with peony and

330, showing three figures with white face-coverings and in persimmon-colored dress among the crowd of people lamenting Ippen's death, differs in terms of the figure's placement, manner of dress, and facial expression,⁷ leading one to believe that these are rather *shuku no chōri* 宿の長吏. If so, this would indicate that they had in common with lepers their persimmon-colored clothing and white face-coverings.⁸

The second concerns the *warabe* category. One of the purposes of using visual indices such as hairstyle and headwear to construct this model of status was to educe thereby the coordinates of the *warabe*. The term itself, of course, denotes

purple becomes a favourite of the aristocracy. During the same period, bitter-persimmon-juice color (*kaki-shibu-iro* 柿渋色), produced by rubbing the brownish juice of bitter persimmons on undyed cloth, also was popular. That color is thought to be more or less similar to *shibu-gami* 渋紙, paper colored by the same method. With the popularity of brown in the Edo period, this color was widely adopted. This color was even incorporated into the wardrobe of Kabuki actors. A reference can be found in the line 'plucking at his persimmon front-tying robe.' While the line gives 'persimmon,' here it refers not to persimmon-color, but rather a dark brown. The original persimmon-color, as well, depending on one's view, could be considered more red, or more yellow." Additionally, comparing several different varieties of the sort of standard color template cards available on the market has been helpful to the ends of cultivating a better sense of color, as well as to deciding on the proper color terms to use.

⁷ In particular, in the scene depicted, the three figures are shown tightly ensconced within the crowd of men and women surrounding the dying Ippen. This sort of emplacement differs from any other of the persimmon-garbed, white-masked lepers, and in conjunction with the other discrepancies in expression and dress, there is little doubt that these figures are either *shuku no chōri* or their subordinates. It goes without saying, but notes on the colophon allows the scroll to be dated to the late 13th century. Thus, this would be an image of late 13th-century *shuku no chōri*. It is possible, then, to push back the image of *shuku no chōri* found in the *Ippen shōnin ekotoba-den* 一遍上人絵詞伝 (*Life of Saint Ippen in Pictures and Words*, 14th century) to the late 13th century.

⁸ Thanks to a heads-up from Ishii Susumu 石井進, I had the opportunity to see the *Ippen shōnin eden* 一遍上人絵伝 (*Illustrated Life of Saint Ippen*) from the Tanaka Shinbi 田中親美 collection (being a Sōshun-edited edition) at the Japanese National Museum at the end of February. Fortunately, the portion on display was from the first section of the third scroll, depicting the scene at Jinmoku-ji temple 甚目寺, and I was thus able to examine the coloration satisfactorily. From that scene, the scroll can be thought to be in the Konkōji Temple 金光寺 lineage, and thus does not include a depiction of *shuku no chōri*. Nevertheless, I was able to analyze it, and would like to summarize a few important points.

1) Of the three circles, the first is composed of standing beggar-monks, dressed in the robes of various sects. The people forming the second circle of "non-person" beggars (*kojiki bi'nin* 乞食非人) and the disabled variously wear garments in colors such as light brown or pale yellow. In the third circle, that of the lepers, all have a white face covering and have persimmon-colored clothing. This suggests that the style of dress adopted by lepers was socially imposed. Additionally, I should like to point out that there are two types of coloration represented in the persimmon-colored robes on display, one being a stronger orange, the other, having a red tinge. Both are the same as those worn by the lepers and *shuku no chōri* in the Ippen the Sage in Pictures.

2) The greater part of the figures in the first circle have some kind of footwear, while those in the second and third circles are almost exclusively barefoot.

3) The bowls held by the beggar-monks in the first circle are black, with crimson interiors,

young children who have yet to go through the coming-of-age ceremony. After proceeding through several stages of transformation in their hairstyle—the shearing off of hair already on the head at birth (*sute-gami*) and the iterative shaving of the baby's head (*ubu-zori* 産剃) before letting it grow out until shoulder length (*tare-gami* 垂髪) and the attendant *kami-oki* 髪置 ritual around the age of three—a child dons the *eboshi* cap and becomes an adult—or rather, a “person” or *hito*—and henceforth is subject to being considered a “person” by others.

Now, if we should turn back to the level of my model of the medieval status system, which we will discuss in greater detail a bit later, what aspects of the theoretical principles underpinning the *warawa* category, within the social relationships of rule and bondage (*shihai reizoku kankei* 支配・隷属関係), should we be able to elucidate?

Hotate Michihisa's recent essay “Shōen-sei-teki mibun haichi to shakai-shi kenkyū no kadai” 庄園制の身分配置と社会史研究の課題 (in *Rekishi hyōron*, 380) cites a passage from the fifth section of *Chiri bukuro* 塵袋 (*Bag of Dust*, see page 355 in the *Nihon koten zenshū* edition) dealing with ethics (*jinrin* 人倫):

What is the meaning of words like *ayatsu* アヤツ or *koyatsu* コヤツ? What of writing the character for ‘dog’ 犬 on the forehead of a young child (*shōni* 小児) and calling it *ayatsu*? What is the reading of the character for ‘dog’? *Ayatsu* means ‘it (the slave) over there’ 彼奴, *koyatsu*, ‘it (the slave) over here’ 此ノ奴 . . . Since the custom is to call things that are not people (*hito naranu mono* 人ナラヌモノ) such, since it is like a dog, one writes ‘dog’ on the forehead of the child.

From the above, one can see that “young children,” “slaves” (*yakko* 奴), and “dogs” share the same quality of “not being people.” In other words, each is something “kept,” in the sense of “keeping” an animal (*kanwareru sonzai* 飼われる存在), or “provided for” (*kyūyō* 給養), and not seen as full persons (*ichi'nin-mae no hito* 一人前の「人」).⁹

In other words, slaves and servants, Hotate informs us, are dependent at least in part on their masters for their upbringing and provisioning, and the convention of providing additional service as thanks beyond one's contracted term

while those of the second and third circles are grey or black on the inside, as well. Why this difference? By the second and third circles of beggars and lepers, there are depicted oval containers (eleven by the second circle, nine by the third), probably containing the tools of their livelihood. Perhaps these grey- or black-lined bowls are theirs, rather than belonging to the temple? This is potentially interesting.

Additionally, for more regarding persimmon-color and such colored vestments, see Amino Yoshihiko's 網野善彦 upcoming essay “Mino-kasa to kaki-katabira” 蓑笠と柿帷, in the special color-themed issue of *is*, 1982.

⁹ *Ge'nin*, or servants, were in the most extreme cases essentially slaves, but as I elaborate later, they were situated within the patrimonial and patriarchal order within their master's household and mediated by it; thus they both had the potential to be and in fact could be positioned within the status order within the domain of Persons or *hito*, while their fortunes were tied to those of their masters.

(*rei-bōkō* 礼奉公) would find its expression through unpaid menial labour, such as attending to their master morning and night (*chōseki shikō* 朝夕祇候), or the giving of gifts. From this perspective, the status of the servant can be understood as in principle falling within the *warabe* category.

In the most extreme cases, the figure of the servant is raised from a young age within the master's home, and thus through eating and drinking together and playing with the master's children, etc., he reproduces relations of domination and bondage that are colored, on the one hand, with feelings of obedient duty for his master, much like those of a child towards a parent, and, on the other, a sense of identification (*ittai-kan* 一体感) as with one's own siblings vis-à-vis his master's children.¹⁰

Returning to the task at hand, what sort of fundamental organizing principle can one locate through these four categories? As indicated in Figure 1, one can locate here the oppositions between “Purity” (*jō* 浄) and “Impurity” (*fujō* 不浄 or *kegare/e* 穢), on the one hand, and that between the “Sacred” (*sei*) and the “Mundane” (*zoku*), on the other. These are the principal oppositional axes I have established, in contradistinction to those in Minegishi's schema of the status system.

Ōyama Kyōhei identifies the core structure of the medieval status system as that of “*kiyome*” キヨメ or “purification;” at its center sits the emperor, superlatively pure and isolated to preserve him from contamination.¹¹ And within the urban structure of the capital governed by the concept of *kiyome*, indivisible from the notion of pollution (*kegare* ケガレ) that had been amplified and nourished by the court aristocracy, those discriminated against as the most polluted group were “non-person” beggars (*kojiki hi'nin* 乞食非人) and lepers.¹² As Chijiwa Itaru's recent essay “*Chūsei minshū no ishiki to shisō*” 中世民衆の意識と思想 (in *Ikei*, volume 4, Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981) indicates, one of the principal punishments stipulated for breach of agreement in medieval contracts, or *kishōmon* 起請文, was the contraction on the part of the offending party of “the severe illnesses of white leprosy (*byakurai* 白癩) and black leprosy” (*kokurai* 黒癩); one important factors keeping the people in thrall within the medieval Shōen estate system was precisely this fear of suffering “white and black leprosy” in the present life.

In sum, this dichotomy of Purity and Impurity, having as its antipodes the

¹⁰ It goes without saying that this identification is a kind of false consciousness, but it behooves one to pay attention to the fact that it has its roots in the shared communal experiences of eating, etc., and re-examine it.

¹¹ See Ōyama Kyōhei 大山喬平, “Chūsei no mibun-sei to kokka” 中世の身分制と国家, in *Nihon chūsei nōson-shi no kenkyū* 日本中世農村史の研究. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978.

¹² Ōyama, on page 369 of the previously cited monograph, points out that “at the gates of aristocratic residences at the beginning of the 11th century were posted plaques directed towards eta 穢多 reading ‘No Entry to Unclean People’ 不浄人不可来.” I would like to inquire further as to what “Unclean Person” or eta-henman 穢多遍満 meant in these cases.

figure of the emperor and the leper, can be thought to be the central axis of the medieval status system.¹³

However, the motivation for constructing the model in Figure 1 was—if I may be allowed to digress—to shed light precisely on those groups of people who did not neatly fit into any of its categories. The following anecdote provides a useful illustration. The Rinzai monk and founder of Chōrakuji Temple 長樂寺 in Serata 世良田, Kōzuke Province, Shakuen Eichō was lecturing to a crowd when he caught sight of a “mountain ascetic” or *yamabushi* 山伏 in his audience. Pointing him out, he said, “What do we have here? It looks to be a man (*otoko* 男) at first glance, and indeed it wears something like a priest’s *kesa*, but it wears no *eboshi*, and it is not a child, nor is it a monk. Neither is it a fart, nor is it a piece of dung; could it be something like a loose stool?” The monks in attendance were mortified—since *yamabushi* were known to be querulous and quick to violence, they were sure Eichō had gotten them all into trouble. The *yamabushi*, however, rather than flying into a rage, was deeply moved by Eichō’s sermon, and soon after took the tonsure.

This narrative of course corroborates the classificatory rubric delineated in the foregoing, but moreover suggests the liminal (*kyōkai-teki* 境界的) quality of the *yamabushi*, in this case neither a “man” (lacking an *eboshi* cap), “child,” nor “monk.” What a dynamic understanding of the medieval status system will ultimately require will be a better understanding of the forces—like this *yamabushi* or “villains in persimmon garb”—that operate on the borders and fringes of this classificatory rubric, and which will ultimately have a hand in its collapse.

2. The Collection of Common Sermons—an Analysis

What do we understand to be the organizing principles maintaining status order in the domains of Persons, or *hito*, and Monks, or *sōryō*? That shall be our next task. To my knowledge, best-suited to aid in our analysis is the *Futsū shōdōshū* 普通唱導集 (*Collection of Common Sermons*).

This text has been taken up most recently in the work of Kuroda Toshio, but it is my aim, informed by Kuroda’s insightful observations and analysis, to draw out from the various sort of relationships partially visible in his work a schematic understanding of the principles governing status relations.

As Kuroda has written, the *Collection of Common Sermons*, collated in 1297, is a reference or compendium of proselyting narratives (*shōdō* 唱導), but the sort of classification of social types carried out in its editorial organization is most likely representative of prevalent social attitudes at the time of its composition, and therefore useful to our ends. Below are the sections relevant to our investigation, to which I have appended some guiding marks.¹⁴

¹³ I see Kuroda Toshio’s “Hereditary Structure” (*shusei-teki kōzō* 種姓の構造) of status as being a system of opposition between Purity and Impurity.

¹⁴ The following list, as it appears now in this translation, has been greatly simplified for the sake of clarity.

I. TWO TYPES OF SPIRITS: SECULAR AND EXTRA—SECULAR

A. Secular division

- (a) Emperors, aristocrats, and other closely related individuals
- (b) Rulers, parents, relatives, nursemaids, servants, house-holding monks and nuns

B. Extra-secular division

- (a) Officially licensed monks and persons employed at religious institutions
- (b) Teachers, fellow disciples, young acolytes, monks, nuns, and Zen masters

II. TWO DIVISIONS OF ARTS AND PROFESSIONS

A'. Secular division

- (1) Professional scholars, performers, and other highly specialized technicians
- (2) Diviners, spiritual mediums, and fortune-tellers
- (3) Painters, sculptors, printers, and manufacturers of various products
- (4) Prostitutes, female divers (*ama*), boatmen, fishermen, dancers and musicians
- (5) Merchants, townspeople, and horse-drivers
- (6) Gamblers, including players of *go* and backgammon

B'. Extra-secular division

- (1) Preachers, chanters, writers of Sanskrit, monks and mountain ascetics
- (2) Various sects of Japanese Buddhism: Hossō, Sanron, Tendai, Kegon, and Shingon

Regarding the first category, I, Kuroda Toshio observes that A(a) delineate various status categories at the level of the state, while A(b) comprises the various relationships within the patrimonial and patriarchal order; B, on the other hand, indicate public sacerdotal ranks and master-disciple relationships. The term “spirits” or “souls” (*shōryō* 聖霊) in the category heading Kuroda interprets as referring to the various status categories derived from concepts of relative hierarchy, these in turn predicated on the state and political order and its concomitant class relations. Regarding II, Kuroda indicates that these are status categories determined by a particular art or skill (*gigei* 技芸), and thus in a broad sense represent the division of labour within society, both in the domains of the Secular and the Extra-Secular; Kuroda also suggests that these could be conceptualized as

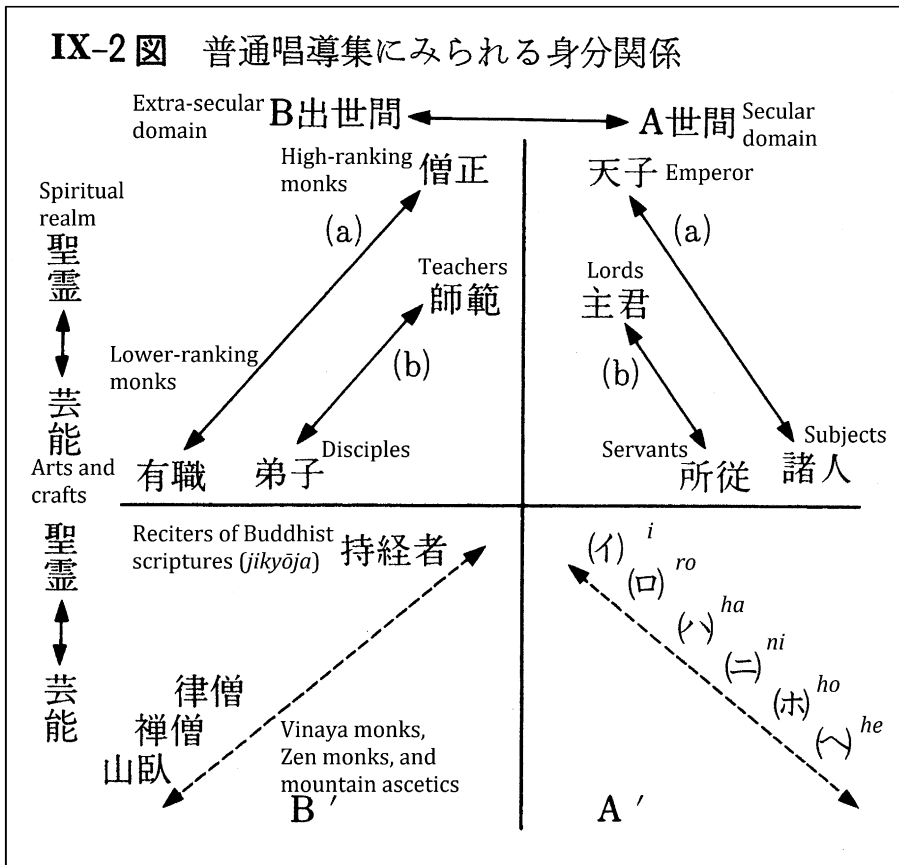


Figure 2. Social relations as depicted within *Futsū shōdōshū* (Collection of Common Sermons).

“creative” or “artistic” statuses (“*geinō-teki*” *mibun* 「芸能的」身分). I believe Kuroda’s reading regarding I is certainly correct, and while I reserve for the present judgement regarding his identification of “artistic” statuses in II, I am mostly in agreement with his findings there.

In the following, I would like, informed by Kuroda Toshio’s findings summarized above, to stress the points I would like to make (though there may be some overlap with Kuroda Toshio’s analysis).

In the *Collection of Common Sermons*, one finds a quadripartite division—A, B, A’, B’—determined by the two oppositional axes of the “Secular ↔ Extra-Secular” and “Spirit ↔ Art,” as can be seen in **Figure 2**; however, one can also discern an organization based on the relationships in the groupings marked (a) and (b). A(a) delineates the system of status organized by official court ranks and appointments, beginning with the emperor and moving downward until reaching the common people (*shonin* 諸人). A(b) has at one limit “the master” or “lord” (*shukun* 主君) and at the other, “servants” (*shōjū*), while in between falls the domestic

patriarchal order, organized around relations of filiality. In other words, this indicates that the master-servant relationship is mediated by domestic patriarchal relations. Thus, the status system at the level of the state—as seen in A(a)—requires for its establishment the internalization of these relations of control and subjugation at the level of persons.

The same can be said in the case of group B. B(a) gives the official statuses of monks and priests, and thus is a system of status organized by the axis of official sacerdotal ranks and titles (*sōi* 僧位; *sōkan* 僧官) at the state level. This system of official state statuses, however, cannot stand on its own; the relationship of master and disciple upheld between instructors and their students and child-acolytes (*dōgyō* 童形), comparable to that of A(b), allows it in reality to be sustained and reproduced.

Category A corresponds to the “Persons” or *bito* subdivision in Figure 1, whereas B fundamentally corresponds to the “Monk” or *sōryō* subdivision. However, the underlying framework of the former category can be understood as being this state-level status system, mediated by patriarchally and domestically-encoded relations of control and subjugation.¹⁵ The latter, as well, has as its underlying framework this state-level status system, here mediated by master-disciple relations. According to Tanaka Minoru in his essay “*Samurai bongē-kō* [侍・凡下考]” (in *Shirin*, 59: 4), the differentiation between the social status of samurai and commoners in the medieval period devolved on whether the person in question boasted an official rank—the structural significance of the system of official ranks and appointments to the status system within the domain of “Persons” is quite clear.

Here, however, I have considered the relationship articulated in A(b) between the figure of the *shukun* or master and *shojū* or servants as essentially being a master-servant relationship, but how does this bode for the sort of relationship one can establish between the *ge'nin*, or servants, which I categorized as belonging to the *warabe* or Child category in my rubric, and these *shojū*?

I will not indulge in a thorough analysis here, but the conclusion to be drawn is that both can be understood to fall in principle within the *warabe* category. However, it would appear as though there is a slight difference between *shojū* and *ge'nin*—essentially, that the former implies rather strongly an aspect of hierarchy or a master-servant relationship.¹⁶ In conjunction with the expansion of the master's

¹⁵ Here, Myōe's 明恵 famous words, also quoted by Kuroda Toshio, also symbolize how the hierarchical relationship between the emperor and his retainers operates as the undergirding frame within the domain of Persons: “For the monk there is a proper way of being a monk, and for the layman, a proper way of being a layman. For the Emperor, as well, there is a proper way of being Emperor, and for his retainers, a proper way of being a retainer. To go against this proper way of being is entirely evil.”

¹⁶ One task for future investigation will be to consider the distinctions and similarities between *ge'nin* and *shojū*. I am furthermore very much interested in how various terms—*ke'nin* 家人, *rōdō* 郎等, *shojū*, etc.—were used to express status, and how they interacted or overlapped with each other. At the present, however, I cannot say any more.

or lord's household, *ge'nin* and *shojū* would be incorporated as "retainers" (*ke'nin* 家人), "young servants" (*waka-tō* 若党), or "serving men" (*rōdō* 郎等), and some would be granted family names (*myōji* 名字), and with the amelioration of the master's rank and status, it was possible that they too would come to be interpolated into the state system of official ranks and titles. Since this relationship would have its basis in the support and care provided by the master, it would be sustained by a form of identification, outwardly similar to a parental or sibling relationship, and thus labour "morning and evening" or tribute would be expected reciprocally. Moreover, since the maintenance or improvement in the standing of the master or lord was tied to one's own emancipation from one's current status or one's advancement to a superior position, *ge'nin* and *shojū* could but devote themselves fully to their service. Therefore, since a certain portion of *ge'nin* were able to ascend to the status of household staff, the notion that one's own fortunes and those of one's master were one and the same was a sort of false consciousness binding *ge'nin* and *shojū* to their service, recursively reproduced.

As shown above, A (the Secular) and B (the Extra-Secular) in Figure 2 correspond to categories of *hito* and *sōryo* in Figure 1, and both are the domain of the ruler and the ruled, ordered by the system of state-level ranks and appointments (either A(a) or B(a)). Internally organizing this order are the relations articulated in A(b), those between the master and his subordinates (or B(b), between master and disciple). And, as indicated by the arrows in Figure 1, one in the *warawa* category, being born the child of parents in the Persons or *hito* category, will in turn become a Person upon coming of age; similarly, servants, conceptually occupying the same *warawa* category, have the possibility of ascending to the status of Person, and thus can be represented by the same dotted arrow.¹⁷

Next, let us examine the two categories of A' and B' dedicated to the arts in Category II.

As Kuroda Toshio points out, these two categories list practitioners of a wide array of skills and professions, representing the division of social labour in a very broad sense, but just as A and B demonstrate a certain logic to their ordering and the relationships implied therein, these groups are no more organized at random than the preceding. The *Shin sarugaku-ki* 新猿楽記 (*New Saru-Gaku Record*)¹⁸ lists various "abilities" (*shonō* 所能) current in the 11th century, when the medieval system of private Shōen estates and court-owned lands was coalescing:

Gamblers, warriors, female mediums, blacksmiths, scholars of history, law, and mathematics, sumo wrestlers, gluttonous and bibulous women, horse dealers, carriage drivers, carpenters, doctors of medicine, diviners, musicians, poets of vernacular verse. . .

¹⁷ More ideologically than realistically, however.

¹⁸ Contained in volume 8 of *Kodai seiji shakai shisō* 古代政治社会思想, from *Iwanami Nihon shisō taikēi*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1979.

And so on and so forth. In addition to including such outliers as “women who eat little but love to drink,” “uncouth fools,” “dregs” (*sōkō* 糟糠), and “widows” (*yamome* 孀) in its list of abilities, one can clearly see that this list is comparatively random in its ordering of terms.

In other words, judging from the manner in which the “abilities” in the *New Saru-Gaku Record* are listed, one could point to, in these various “abilities” of early medieval people, a disorganized dynamism, a vitality not constricted by the status order.

By contrast, in the 13th century *Collection of Common Sermons*, as I demonstrate in Figure 2, the various “arts” listed are ranked, forming a corresponding pair with the “spirits” in categories A and B. A’ can thus be roughly broken down into six subgroups, numbered above. Group (1) comprises the “arts” of the court, with its “literati” (*bunshi* 文士) and poets (*kajin* 歌人), directly tied to the world of the aristocracy—the emperor of course as its center; Group (2) collects various magic-workers (*jujutsusha* 呪術者), while Group (3) brings together artisans of various sorts; Group (4) lists acrobats and entertainers, Group (5), merchants and traders, while Group (6) lists competitive game-players. From the clear contrast between Groups (1) and (6), it is apparent that the logic informing the selection and order here is governed by some kind of value judgement. Particularly interesting is that the magicians of Group (2) occupy the second rung, immediately following Group (1), gesturing toward the importance of such professions in the middle ages. Second, the fact that fishermen (*amabito* 海人) and sailors (*funabito* 船人) are listed after courtesans (*yūjo* 遊女) is striking, but the position of the latter here perhaps has some relation to the Eguchi courtesans (*Eguchi no yūjo* 江口の遊女). The third point of interest is that the position attributed to merchants and townsmen is lower than that of Group (4)’s entertainers, and that moreover they are seen as being proximate to gamblers; this certainly invites one to consider the position of merchants and townsmen during this period.

Similarly, B’ evidences a logic to its ordering, and as can be seen in Figure 2, with “those knowing the sutras and constantly reciting them” (*jikyōja* 持經者) at the head, and “mountain monks” (*yamabushi*) at the tail, and most likely indicates the same sort of value judgement as seen in A’.

If this is the case, it should prove impossible to collect these various “artistic” statuses and reduce them to either one status or status stratum. In other words, as one can glean from the order given, these “artistic” statuses demonstrate a certain stratification, one that corresponds to the status system having the emperor as its center. The various arts and professions expressed in A’ and B’ are situated hierarchically within the system of official state ranks and titles, one could say. Be it the domain of Persons or that of Monks, without the hierarchical distribution throughout the system of the agents responsible for performing these various “arts,” neither register would be able to last a day—such goes almost without saying.

Recently, Amino Yoshihiko 網野善彦 has taken interest in such “arts” (*geinō*) and “abilities” (*shonō*), and has argued the case for a “non-titled commoner status” (*heimin mibun* 平民身分) and an “artisan status” (*shokunin mibun* 職人身分) as discrete status categories for “free commoners” (*jiyūmin* 自由民) in the middle ages.¹⁹ I will refrain from addressing the former, but I would like to touch upon this artisan status category in its connection to the “arts.”

Of course, Amino’s arguments cover a great deal of ground, and in a host of different contexts in his *Nihon chūsei no minshūzō* 日本中世の民衆像 he essays a definition this artisan status. I fear I will not do a tidy job in summarizing, but one can perhaps proffer the following few points. One: Those individuals who engage in the arts (*‘geinō’ wo itonami* 「芸能」を営み), have their own specialized “Way” (*michi* 道), or make their living through “lowly craft” (*‘gezai’ wo togetsutsu* 「外財」を遂げつつ) are dubbed “artisans” (p. 119). Two: Such artisans comprised, from the 12th and 13th centuries onward, those not involved in agriculture, such as fishermen, hunters, craftsmen and artisans, merchants, performers, and magicians (p. 105–6), and since “employment” (*shoku* or *shiki* 職) and “art” (*geinō*) are indissolubly linked, low-level *shōen* stewards could also be included in the category (p. 109, 123). Three: As a prerogative ensured either at the state or social level, they were either all or in part exempt from annual taxation and other obligations, and were thus ensured a special kind of “freedom” (p. 23, 105, 110, 124), and in exchange, with their particular skills serve the powerful religious institutions, beginning with the emperor (p. 105, 125–6).

These are all insightful observations, and deserving of consideration. However, if the questions is whether this proves sufficient for determining “the artisan” as a discrete status category, I am afraid I have to differ. First of all, Amino is compelled to limit historically his “artisan” to the 12th and 13th centuries onward due to the fact that the *New Saru-Gaku Record* lists “farmers” (*tato* 田堵) among the various “abilities” it enumerates (p. 106). According to Amino’s argument, in the 12th and 13th centuries, farmers disappear from the realm of the “arts,” leaving it the domain of those not engaged in agriculture. However, as discussed earlier, this notion of the “arts” or *geinō* is based on a broad understanding of the social division of labour, a perspective sufficiently capacious, as one sees in the *New Saru-Gaku Record*, to include even “women given choose drink over food” and “uncouth fools.” In this sense, it could be said that anyone and everyone would have some “art.” In fact, the late Muromachi *Sanjūni ban shokunin uta-awase emaki* 三十二番職人歌合絵巻 (*Thirty-two Artisans Poetry Competition*

¹⁹ Amino Yoshihiko, “Chūsei toshi-ron” 中世都市論, in *Iwanami Chūsei kōza Nihon-shi, Chūsei* vol. 4, 1976; “Chūsei zenki no ‘sanjo’ to kyūmenden” 中世前期の『散所』と給免田, in *Shirin*, 59: 1, 1976; “Chūsei ni okeru tennō shihai ken no ikkōsatsu” 中世における天皇支配権の一考察, in *Shigaku zasshi*, 81: 8, 1980; *Nihon chūsei no minshūzō* 日本中世の民衆像. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980. For a representative critique of Amino, see Wakita Haruko 脇田晴子, “Chūsei-shi kenkyū to toshi-ron” 中世史研究と都市論, in *Nihon chūsei toshi-ron*. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981, in which she critiques his work on three points, all of which are quite important.

Picture Scroll) features a “farmer” (*nō'nin* 農人), indicating that the prevailing attitude until the late medieval period included “farmers” within the category of “artisans.” Second, that Amino includes the various “artisans” of the Shōen estate—local landlords (*myōshu* 名主), estate administrators (*shōkan* 荘官), lower-ranking stewards (*geshi* 下司), assistant-stewards (*kumon* 公文), guards and police (*sōtsuibushi* 惣追捕使)—in his artisan status category is simply untenable, and rouses a great number of doubts. Would Amino, for instance, maintain that local landlords are not peasants, or involved in agriculture (*binōgyōmin* 非農業民)? Furthermore, simply because they share the general attribute of being exempt from taxation and eligible for the receipt of tax-exempt fields, is it at all feasible to lump together stewards, local landlords, lacquer workers, dyers, and puppeteers within a single status category? This anticipates what will be the thrust of the argument in the following section, namely, how should one think about status? Third, Amino considers “sacrifice-catcher” (*niebito* 贅人), “offeror” (*kugonin* 供御人), “a person in service to the gods” (*ji'nin* 神人), “offering-maker” (*gusainin* 供祭人), and “mediums” (*yoryūdo* 寄人) and such to be mere appellative terms or designations, or designations within the system (as opposed to discrete status categories) (p. 127, 128, 133). This may be par for the course within Amino’s framework, operating as he is with his artisan status category, but how do these designations relate to expressions or articulations of status? In my opinion, *jinin* and *yoribito* for instance function in the medieval period as status categories at the state and social level. In sum, I consider these various groups as forming a status category composed of a collective serving powerful religious institutions with their particular skills or “arts.” If one had to give it a representative designation, perhaps one could call it the “medium status.”²⁰

From the foregoing, it should be apparent that within the field of medieval status studies, the relationship between status designations (*mibun koshō* 身分呼称) or expressions of status (*mibun hyōgen* 身分表現), on the one hand, and concepts of status (*mibun gainen* 身分概念), on the other, has yet to be made clear. In the following section, I would like to interrogate this particular problematic.

3. Status Terms and Status Concepts

The problematic I proposed in the previous section can be divided into two points for argument. The first revolves around how one should think about and evaluate the appellative terms used for status—the lexical terms or designations used to indicate status. The other concerns status at the conceptual level—how should we conceptualize status, and subsequently what sort of approach should we adopt when considering it? Due to the formal constraints of this essay, the observations here will per force be limited to fulfilling the task at hand, the elab-

²⁰ See Wakita Haruko’s previously cited essay, p. 24. For an accessible summary of Wakita’s opinion, see his “Shinza no keisei” 新座の形成, *Rekishi kōron*, 5: 9, 1983.

oration of a structural schema of medieval status after my own fashion. In any case, let us begin with the latter of the two.

So, what *is* status? Heretofore there have been many definitions suggested. Perhaps most well-known is Ishimoda Tadashi's 石母田正 definition: "Status is a hierarchical order (*kaisō-teki chitsujo* 階層的秩序) in which class relations (*kaikyū kankei* 階級関係) have been fixed as the political or state order (*seiji-teki mata wa kokka-teki chitsujo* 政治的または国家的秩序). . . . With the emergence of modern capitalist society, this status order is completely dismantled, thereby laying bare the actual class relations underlying it; in anterior periods—with the exception, of course, of the primitive era before either class or status—class relations more or less were manifest through the phenomenological form of status."²¹ However, the current attitude is that this definition has been basically overturned already by work done on subject of status authored by Kuroda Toshio and others. For instance, Kuroda has demonstrated the coexistence of multiple strands of status relations (*mibun no sho-keiretsu* 身分の諸系列) in (1) the village (*sonraku* 村落), (2) Shōen or court rule (*shōen kōryō no shibai* 荘園・公領の支配), (3) the patrimonial order of powerful institutions (*kenmon no kasan chitsujo* 権門の家産秩序), and (4) the state structure (*kokka-teki taisei* 国家的体制), as well as the corresponding contingent sites through which status is established or realized—in (1) the community (*kyōdōtai* 共同体), through (2) the social division of labour (*shakai-teki bungyō* 社会的分業), via (3) class relations (*kaikyū kankei* 階級関係), and through (4) the state (*kokka* 国家)—and has deftly shown how they relate to each other.²² Thus, this proposed an analytical position that has permitted us to move away from an understanding of status as merely the phenomenological manifestation of class relations.²³ The importance of this argument is clear from the growth the field of medieval status-system studies has seen in its wake. Next, we have Ōyama Kyōhei's definition. While basically accepting Kuroda's argument, Ōyama proceeds to define status in the following terms:

The organization of status in premodern society takes as its foundation that principle responsible for organizing internally collective human power exercised through the perpetual achievement of human social activity. These various social activities can be divided into a range of levels, encompassing productive activities, such as agriculture, fishing, hunting, etc., artistic and military

²¹ Ishimoda Tadashi 石母田正, "Kodai no mibun chitsujo" 古代の身分秩序, in *Nihon kodai kokkaron*, part I. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973, p. 250.

²² See Kuroda Hideo's essay, the citation for which is given in note 5.

²³ Takahashi Masaaki's 高橋昌明 essay "Chūsei no mibun-sei shuppitsu ni atatte ryokuten wo oita koto" 『中世の身分制』執筆にあたって力点を置いたこと (yet to be published, but will surely go to print sooner or later), while supplementing the essay mentioned in my supplement to this chapter, locates the fundamental problems in Ishimoda's theory of status. For another critique of Ishimoda's theory, see Hara Hidesaburō's 原秀三郎 "Nihon kodai kokka-shi kenkyū no riron-teki zentei" 日本古代国家史研究の理論的前提, in *Nihon kodai kokka-shi kenkyū*. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1980.

activities, and even political and religious activity. Status has the basis for its establishment in the internal norms of a collective that has organized itself as the executive agent of social activity at such various levels.

So defining status, Ōyama gives as archetypes of such social collectives or organizations (1) the household (*ie* イエ), (2) the village (*mura* ムラ), (3) parties (*tō* 党), coalitions (*ikki* 一揆), guilds (*za* 座), congregations (*shū* 衆), warrior groups (*bushi-dan* 武士団), (4) powerful nobles (*kenmon kizoku* 権門貴族), the military government authority, or *bakufu* 幕府, powerful religious institutions (*kenmon jisha* 権門寺社), and (5) the state. In this manner, Ōyama's interpretation is first of all informed by the theory of the division of labour, and second, takes as its point of departure the establishment of internal parameters or norms on the part of its various social collectives, and posits as the basis for the establishment of the status system a procedural movement on the part of all social collectives towards a general norm.

In this way, the definitions of and debate surrounding status have changed greatly since Kuroda's essay was published in 1972.²⁴ The three points of greatest importance I have learned from this new wave of research are, (1) the need to consider the multiple contingencies, such as the division of labour, class, the community, and the state, informing the establishment of status; (2) that one should understand premodern people as part of social collectives, and that one should apprehend status as the internal norm or order of such social collectives; and (3), that one must consider the conceptual character of status at the level of habit or custom, law, and religion. That being said, I would like to offer my own definition of status:

Status is the basic mechanism or system (*shisutemu* システム) in premodern society of human differentiation (*ningen sabetsu* 人間差別) and stratification (*seisōka* 成層化). In premodern society, human beings exist principally as part of a collective or group, and as such, the various statuses inscribed on individuals also have ontological presence as various status groups. These various status groups can be understood to range in an ever-expanding fashion from the smallest of collective social units (the household, the village) through various social collectives at every level, until culminating at its furthest extent at the level of the national community. The principle establishing and maintaining internal structural order within each status collective at each level is precisely status. The contingencies through which it is actualized are primarily the divisions of labour and class, among others, and it sees legitimation through custom, law, and religion.²⁵

However, this definition is merely a starting point, a springboard for moving

²⁴ Arashiro's 安良城 essay, noted in my supplementary comments, gives perhaps the most concise reflections on the basic essence, formation, contingency of emergence, structure, and organization of status; unfortunately, it is still incomplete, and I anxiously await its completion.

²⁵ Regarding concepts of status, there are many definitions offered by sociologists, beginning with Weber. I am still deliberating just how to receive them.

closer to our goal. The question is, rather, by turning our sights towards status, what sort of insight into the social or state order of the medieval period will become available to us? We require analytical methodologies and conceptual categories that can guide us to those ends. In the following, I will briefly summarize what is currently in our arsenal.

First of all, there is the question of the appellative terms used for status, touched upon in the foregoing. In my opinion, original work directed towards constructing an understanding of the various terms used reciprocally between people in the middle ages remains to be done. In other words, since human beings in premodern society find themselves necessarily situated in direct, unmediated relationships with other human beings through the relations of interpersonal dependency binding them together, one can only assume that human relationships, of no matter what sort, must find articulation at the level of language or naming—in brief, through appellative terms; thus, it is imperative that a level of analysis able to interrogate these various terms in an original manner be established. If one approaches such appellative terms from the vantage point of their categorization and organization, the question quickly becomes one of precisely how one chooses to in fact go about their categorization, but such terms can and do very well exist for nearly every conceivable kind of human difference or classification—people’s physical conditions, their social rank, faculties or skills, employment, their age, gender, race, place of residence, religion, et cetera. Dredging up from this veritable “sea of appellatives” those that can properly be considered “status terms” is a task unto itself. For instance, even in the case of the *New Saru-Gaku Record* or *Collection of Common Sermons* cited in the previous sections, the various appellative terms that appear are not at all exclusively status terms. For instance, few would admit as status categories an “uncouth fool” status, or a “dregs” status, or a “widow” status. One also has difficulty conceiving of a “constant-sutra-reciter” status, as well.

However, the problem is, of course, that mingled with all these various appellatives are, in fact, status terms, and that they can tend to overlap subtly with others. For instance, if presented with a “fisherman” status (*ama mibun* 海人身分), a “townsman” status, or a “courtesan” status, it is not entirely inconceivable that some critics, at least, would recognize them as such. Even in the case of critics who take such status terms more broadly, one can imagine the next development in the discussion.

As to what I myself have come up against, one finds quite a variety of discriminatory status terms in circulation—“non-person” (*hi'nin*), “hill person” (*saka no mono* 坂者), “lodge person” (*shuku no mono* 宿者), and “dog-priest” (*inu-ji'nin* 犬神人), among others. These terms, it would seem, while nevertheless being subtly distinct also overlap. In some cases, they are essentially synonymous, while in other historical documents, they seem to refer to entirely different figures. In such cases, one surmises that their actual substance (*jittai* 実体) was itself perhaps

fluid, and that the status terms themselves are either regionally specific, or that they are named merely metonymically, based on their place of residence or the labour in which they were engaged. Moreover, the labour of these “non-persons” was varied and could change quite easily.

While I am of the opinion that, when confronted with how best to sum up these various status terms, Kuroda Toshio’s model, positing as it does a “non-person” status category, is at present the most convincing,²⁶ it is nevertheless clear that we require a framework in which we can situate and put in order the debate moving us closer toward these diverse status terms. If such can be accomplished, it is certain that we will be able to gain much in ordering, investigating, and analyzing all sorts of status terms. In the medieval period, for instance, it was not uncommon for a single individual to belong to different collectives concomitantly, and in such cases, that person, one supposes, would have had two different status appellatives simultaneously.²⁷ Such cases, if approached rigorously, would be sure to furnish the grounds for very interesting argument.

If one pushes the point further, two considerations come to mind. One is a point emerging from the difference in quality of status terms. Otherwise put, in contradistinction to one’s status determined by birth (through lineage or bloodline),²⁸ there are status terms of a different sort—for instance, statuses that are delimited to the lifetime of the individual.²⁹ How to contend with these statuses and their corresponding appellatives will likely be a question of individual approach. The second point is that there are many status terms—such as “underling/slave” (*warawa/yakko*) and “servant” (*ge’nin*)—that have an incredibly broad denotative extent.³⁰ In order to deal with these sorts of status terms, one must problematize the distinctions made and the linkages between relative articulations of status (*sōtai-teki mibun hyōgen* 相対的身分表現) and relative status relationships, on the one hand, and absolute articulations of status (*zettai-teki mibun hyōgen* 絶対的身分表現) and absolute status relationships, on the other. In other words, articulations of relative status would, depending on the vantage point from

²⁶ See Kuroda’s essay in note 5, pages 361, and 377–390.

²⁷ The Tanaka essay cited in footnote no. 20 points out that it was possible for one to serve two masters at the same time, and underscores the fact that in such cases one would have two statuses at the same time (p. 21–22). Also, see p. 296 of the Takahashi essay mentioned in my supplementary notes.

²⁸ At the heart of the ideological underpinnings of the status system, of course, are concepts of heredity or origin (*shusei kannen* 種姓觀念), in other words, lineage, bloodlines, and blood relations.

²⁹ Takahashi divides these into birth status, status of affiliation, and labour or employment status. This seems promising for future inquiry.

³⁰ Takahashi Masaaki’s work in “Nihon chūsei hōken shakai-ron no zenshin no tame ni—ge’nin no kihon-teki seikaku to sono honshitsu” 日本中世封建社会論の前進のために—下人の基本的性格とその本質, *Rekishi hyōron*, 332, 1977, can be read as an example of the particular breadth of the ge’nin designation.

which the articulation of status is made, see the same status appellation deployed to refer to a different object.³¹ If one fails to make this distinction clear, it will be impossible to avoid confusion at the level of argument.

It is my honest feeling that one cannot make any progress in thinking through the various aspects of status terminology without delving deep into the lexical universe of the middle ages and its people, but I must concede that at the present, I do not have the resources for an undertaking at that level. At this juncture, I can only indicate what remains to be done.

In what remains of this section, I would like to outline the direction and method of my approach, and connect it to the presentation of my model of the medieval status system that will follow in the next section.

In sum, by regarding the numerous appellatives comprising such status terms in relation to the system of symbolic and theoretical classification and differentiation, can one not perhaps not situate their coordinates within the status system? Thinking thusly, I set out in the first section of this chapter from a very fundamental and symbolic categorization of people. This was my quadripartite model of *bito*, *sōryō*, *warawa*, and *hi'nin* (the only important group not addressed in this schema is that of *onna*, or Women). By examining them through their linkages with these four categories, situating these various appellative terms should be possible. And, from this perspective, one can see that of the five distinctions made in status at the state level, or what has been conventionally considered the apex of the system, three—the aristocratic status (*kishu mibun* 貴種身分), the bureaucratic/samurai status (*tsukasa samurai mibun* 司・侍身分), and the peasant status (*hyakushō mibun* 百姓身分)—fall within the realm of *bito* or Persons, while those excluded from the realm of Persons are those of the *ge'nin* status, who fall within the rubric of *warawa*, and those of the *hi'nin* status, falling into the *hi'nin* or Non-Persons rubric.

Secondly, one must consider status and the status system while keeping in mind the distinction between the “endogenic” status relations within social collectives and “exogenic” status relations—those operative between social collectives.

In other words, as Ōyama has previously indicated, status operates as the internal norms of a social collective. And in premodern society, no matter who one may be, it is only as a constituent member of a collective or group that one can be an “individual.” Therefore, people, through the endogenic norms of their social collective, are positioned within a particular set of status relationships, while at the same time, vis-à-vis the outside world, they per force display the

³¹ Tanaka Minoru's 田中稔 essay “Samurai bongē kō” 「侍・凡下考」, *Shirin*, 59: 4, 1976, discusses how Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実, in his diary *Gyokunyō* 玉葉, refers to Hatta Tomoie's steward Shōji Tarō as “Tomoie's *shōji*,” “Tomoie's *ge'nin*,” and “Tomoie's *ryū*,” demonstrating that, even though he was of samurai extraction, to Kanezane, he was nothing more than a servant. This is a representative example of such relative status.

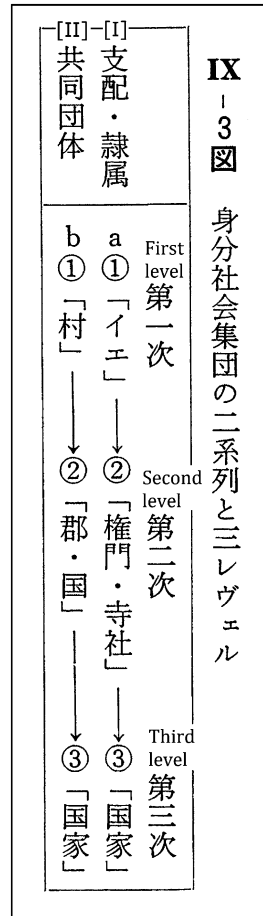


Figure 3. The two orders (vertical) and three levels (horizontal) of social organization. [I] First order: Rulers and the ruled; [II] Second order: Communal groups; a① household; a② powerful houses and religious institutions; a③ the state; b① villages; b② counties and provinces; b③ the state

particular characteristics of their status affiliation—through their abilities, work, dress, mannerisms, etc.—in their “exogenic” engagement in social activity. In other words, status relations must be analyzed with a clear distinction made between such internal status relations and external status relations.

In this case, one is faced first with the problem of breaking various social collectives into discrete units, and next by the relative level of each social collective (see **Figure 3**). In brief, one must differentiate between at least three levels of endogenic status relations and appellatives—those at the level of the individual social collective unit, those at the broader societal level (*shakai-teki kibo* 社会的規模), and ultimately those at the national or state level (*kokka-teki kibo* 国家的規模). I think one can envision this in principle as operating along two sets of

axes.³² The first, axis a, operates vertically, indicating relations of rule and subjugation, and moves upward from (1) the household, through (2) the powerful local authorities to ultimately reach (3) the state. The second, axis b, operates laterally, representing communal relations, and thus moves outward, from (1) the village, through (2) the county or province before extending to the entirety of (3) the state. In other words, a(1) and b(1) are first-degree social collective units, while a(2) and b(2) represent the second-degree, societal level of internal status relations and order, and a(3) and b(3) represent the third-degree, national level of internal status order (of course, this is merely a model; one could, for instance, posit b(1) as “the town,” or b(2) as a “provincial coalition”).³³

Here, at the first-degree level of social collective units, we have individual households and villages. Within these first-degree units, the vertically-organized household comprises the master and his servants or *ge'nin* and *shojū*, over whom he exerts authority, while the laterally-organized village comprises residents and villagers, on the one hand, and peripheral “in-between people” (*mōto* 間人) and vagabonds (*rō'nin* 浪人), on the other.³⁴

Of importance here is that these individual collective units, as the individual cells of society and the state, formulate their own specific status relationships and terminology. The status relationships internal to these collective units are, generally speaking, closed, and function in accordance with the principles or characteristics specific to them; however, it should be clear that they cannot be completed through their internal functioning alone. In other words, they are determined by the status terminology and relationships operative at the secondary and tertiary levels. No matter what the term, chances are that it operates either as a term or relationship at the secondary or tertiary levels, and even in the case of exceptions to such, it would be linked to the system of external, exogenic status relations and nomenclature. For instance, “status XX” within a certain collective may correspond to “status YY” in another collective, but at the secondary or tertiary levels, both would be found to correspond to “status ZZ,” thereby rendering apparent the relative positions of the various status terms at play. In this sense, the status relationships and terminology within a collective unit only come to bear meaning in relation to the exterior. In other words, at the secondary level, regional society or the institutions of local authority cannot but impose a particular internal status order, and as such this secondary level becomes the basis for the status relations and terminology internal to society.

Ready examples of such second-level regional societies are, of course, the province, county, and township (*gō* 郷). Here, regional coalescence forms a

³² Please refer to the entry on “Status-System Society” authored by Naruse Osamu 成瀬治, in *Sekai daihyakka jiten* 世界大百科事典. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2007.

³³ I have let “powerful local authorities” represent the second-degree category, but other groupings—parties, coalitions, guilds, congregations, etc., are basically situated at this second-degree level.

³⁴ This community need not be the village; it could be, for instance, a craftsmen’s or merchants’ guild.

discrete set of “endogenic” status relations, and thereby structures the status hierarchies and orders operating reciprocally between individual social collective units. “Exogenic” status relations at the level of individual collective units form the “endogenic” status relations at the secondary level. The same holds for the institutions of authority, as the various individual units incorporated into the patrimonial order and ruling system are ranked through their organization as “endogenic” statuses (for instance, *karei* 家礼 versus *ke'nin* 家人). Within such a patrimonial system, is it natural to observe a multitude of positions commensurate with the complexity of its organization. Additionally, shrine-workers (*ji'nin*), mediums (*yoribito*), *kugonin*, *niebito*, *kunin*, and weavers (*ori-te* 織手), among others, have their status determined by the shared condition of being in service to this patrimonial ruling system, and can thus be understood as “endogenic” statuses at the second level—in other words, as societal- or state-level statuses.³⁵

By contrast, the tertiary, state level subsumes the regional domains negotiated reciprocally by the local political and landed authorities or county or provincial administration, and as a larger unit absorbing such borders, has established within it its status relations and designations. The status system *qua* state order constitutes, basically, the normative set of relations within the state, and is thus status *qua* endogenic normative relations. At this level, status is ordered according to the axis of official court ranks and titles. The status ranking at this third level, in other words, at the internal level of the state, comprises the aforementioned categories of the aristocracy, bureaucrats and samurai, and peasants and lesser commoners.³⁶

In this manner, status relations and order can be organized into three levels. The first are those operative within social collective units as foundational “endogenic” status relationships. The second are the status relationships within a specific regional society or within the administrative purview of powerful ruling institutions, which operate at the societal level, incorporating as they have these individual social collective units. One could say that these are status relations of a dynamic character, prone to change in response to transformations or developments in various social collectives.³⁷ Comparatively, the third is the set of

³⁵ Takahashi considers these status terms to be what he calls statuses of affiliation.

³⁶ According to Kuroda, Tanaka, Ōyama, and Ishida Yūichi 石田雄一, these groups can more or less be summarized in the following way. The aristocracy comprises the collective of nobles organized around the imperial family, the highest ranking being the family of the regent (*sekkanke* 摂関家), then descending from the rank of *kugyō* 公卿 to *tayū* 大夫, no lower than the fifth rank. They hold political power. Bureaucrats and samurai are lower ranking courtiers, serving and subordinate to the aristocracy while still making up the ruling class. Peasants and commoners compose the majority of the ruled, have no rank, and maintain households.

³⁷ Ōyama in the previously cited essay does similarly (p. 374), but Takahashi's essay deepens its ruminations on the fact that status “is shaped by its involvement with the existence of autonomous groups of various types, and thus has a social reality and ‘rationality’ of its own” (p. 319). I have thought about this, but have yet to make up my mind entirely.

status relations or the status order that has internally organized at the level of the state the status relations between various social collectives, and is thus the set of status relations or status order internal to the state. It is only natural that this should fulfill the role of regimenting the status relations “between” social collectives. Not only that, but this status order, oriented outward, produces international and ethnic status hierarchies with China, Korea, or the Ryukyu Islands.

It goes without saying that responsible for bringing together social collectives in this manner is the state-level status order. Within this regime, subordinate status relations are arranged as “endogenic” status relations. This is because, in other words, at that level, the state-level organization of status determined by official court ranks and titles is taken to be the fundamental axis of the social order, and through this, the reciprocal relationships between status relations and their concomitant articulations are arranged.

Of course, the arrangement of status at the state level is static. Its primary function is the maintenance, ordering, and fine tuning of the reciprocal relations between the existing status categories.³⁸ Therefore, its position is diametrically opposed to that of the various activity, carried out by dynamic, moving agents, responsible for the production of status terminology in premodern society. However, at the same time, when thinking of the formation of a new state, it would be natural that the formation of a new status order at the state level would be dynamic, having as its axis the status of the state-forming subject. What I would like to emphasize here in particular is that the development of the common people at the societal level, specifically development in the social division of labour and the growth of the classes, always harbours within it the tendency to form new statuses.

However, this Japanese status order is, however, far from simple. For one, the national, “endogenic” order is itself in turn determined by its emplotment among states within an international status order. For instance, the status order at the diplomatic level surrounding the relationship between the Chinese emperor (*keōtei* 皇帝) and the Japanese king (*kokunō* 国王). Another example would be the relationships between people variously “within” and “outside” the state; the lines drawn to determine at what point one ceases being Japanese and begins to be a foreigner, or a barbarian, for instance, are implicated in structuring the framework of status relations at a very delicate level. Here, status relations at the inter-ethnic level begin structuration.

4. The Status System in the Middle Ages: In Lieu of a Conclusion

What has been delineated in the preceding is altogether quite simple. To summarize, in the first section, by indicating what facets of the status system are

³⁸ It should go without saying that the power this function of status at the state has is conceptual and ideological.

visible at the level of visual markers, we were able to derive two sets of opposing principles, Purity ↔ Pollution, on the one hand, and Sacred ↔ Mundane, on the other, and we indicated that the central axis of the medieval status system was for the former, having at its poles the emperor and the *bi'nin*, in its extreme form the leper.

In the second section, by analyzing the *Collection of Common Sermons*, we indicated that similarly two sets of contrasting oppositions could be derived—one being Extra-Secular ↔ the Secular, corresponding to the Sacred-Mundane binary, and the other, Spirit ↔ Art. The level of Spirit can be summed up as follows. The Secular world is organized by a status system, mediated by the relations of authority and subjugation binding lord and follower, linking the emperor at its zenith to the common people as its base through the state system of court ranks and titles. The Extra-Secular world is organized in an analogous fashion, governed by a state-level status system of priestly ranks from *sōjō* 僧正 to *ushiki* or *yūsoku* 有職, mediated by the master-disciple relationship. By contrast, the grouping of Arts appears at first glance to be composed of a random assortment of professions, but upon closer examinations reveals itself to be ordered in a manner analogous to the state-level status systems above, suggesting that its composition has in part been determined by the state-level status order.

In the third section, to assist our investigation of status, we discussed the distinction to be made between “endogenic” status and “exogenic” status, and attempted to show how the nature of status, as a set of internal, endogenic norms, is arranged at three levels: the first, within the unitary social collective, the second, within a larger societal context, and the third, finally, as a status system at the state level.

What remains to be done at this juncture, after making these observations, is of course to visually schematize the medieval status system. The status system, demonstrating the sort of complexity of the medieval period that it does, recognizes at the state level only the categories of “the aristocracy,” “bureaucrats and samurai,” and “peasants and commoners” as forming its basic constituent status groups. Kuroda Toshio has previously remarked on this. The problem confronting us is what sort of diagram can we elaborate while retaining these three status groups as an axis while including our findings from the preceding sections.

The first point we should reiterate here is that the status system functions as the endogenic organizing principle for social collectives. In the vertically organizes warrior households, for instance, status relations are maintained by the axis furnished by hierarchical authority, domestic relationships and relationships of dependency, like the relationship between master and servant. While each household exists with its own individual peculiarities, as a stratified order each has at its poles the master and his servants, with all individual relationships falling in between organized hierarchically through one's specific relationship to the head of the household. The organization of these unitary collectives can be understood to have an oblong, fusiform morphology, similar to those of muscle

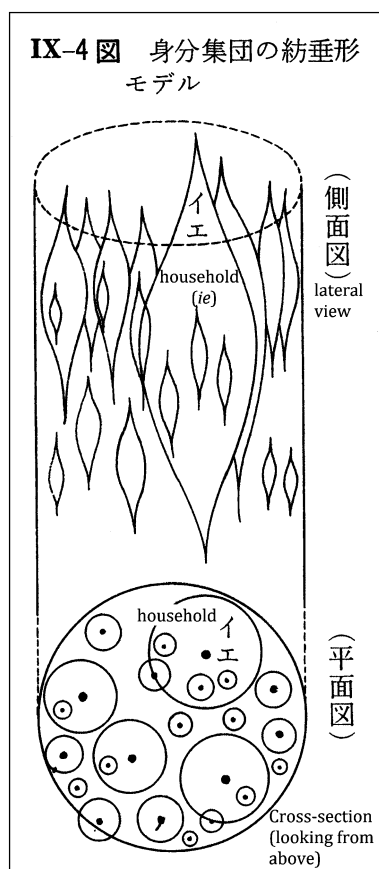


Figure 4. Spindle-shaped model depicting the relationships between social groups

fibers. The status system as a societal system is constituted by the interactions and interrelationships between these fusiform units. In other words, the larger fusiform units of patrimonial households will contain within them a plurality of smaller households, and thus contain a plurality of smaller fusiform units. Powerful ruling institutions, such as the estates of the local nobility or shrine and temple estates, regardless of their relative size, form compound, aggregate fusiform status systems. These fusiform social collectives of sizes great and small, through their reciprocal interactions, give shape to status relations. Meanwhile, while communal groupings such as the village, forming the lateral axis, do demonstrate stratification, representing them by fusiform units is inappropriate; to illustrate, for instance, how the village is a communal unit comprising all individual households, I have decided to represent this, via the dotted lines in **Figure 4**, as an oval cross-section laterally circumscribing the vertically-oriented unitary collectives. Larger administrative units, such as provinces or counties, are homologous.

The second point is to situate the emperor at the apex, and the non-person *hi'nin* at the terminus. According to Kuroda Toshio, “the medieval status system, having a special hereditary quality, . . . establishes above a status stratum reserved for the revered and sacred, above and beyond the realm of the human, and below, an abject status stratum of the unclean, far below the realm of the human, and within these conceptually powerful strictures, produces a public, stratified status system, that does not rely on private interpersonal relations. That is its particular characteristic.”³⁹ As I understand it, as the emperor, occupying the apex of the status system, represents the quintessence of purification and de-personalization (*hi'ningen-ka* 非人間化), within the collective of non-person *hi'nin*, lepers are considered the quintessence of the polluted or unclean, and this dichotomy of purity and pollution determines the oppositional poles undergirding relations within the medieval status order. Between these extremes are the compound fusiform collectives previously discussed, varying in size and proportion. Thus, this overarching relationship can be modeled as a much larger fusiform structure, subsuming all other fusiform units and pulling them towards its two extremes.

The third point to be made is that the status system basically articulates the order or stability between the center and the periphery or borders. In other words, rural regions and localities, having the capital as their putative center, determine their status systems concentrically. One must understand the total status system in Japan as divided between the capital, the rural provinces, and the periphery or borderlands. It is likely that one's relative proximity with regards to the seat of political authority and the capital was an indispensable factor in understanding the calculus of the status structure. In the case of the capital, since it was arranged around the emperor as the seat of purity, the polluted were made to gather at its edges. Outside the capital lie Yamashiro Province and the Kinai region. Were the peasants of the capital and the Kinai region, and those of more distant provinces, considered to share the same status? Most likely not. Similarly, as Tanaka has pointed out regarding the samurai status, one can see discrepancies in shogunate law in the standing and treatment of rural samurai.⁴⁰ When it comes to those living on the distant peripheries or borderlands of the state, as Murai has pointed out, since they were often seen to be something akin to “demons” (*oni* 鬼) it is difficult to think that the status of those on the periphery of the state's territory would have been considered to share the same status with the inhabitants of the Kinai region. In other words, if one were to take a cross-section of our fusiform model, at the resulting circle's center would be the site of purity, and at the perimeter, the zone of pollution, thereby visually representing the regime of Purity↔Pollution laterally.⁴¹ As the

³⁹ See p. 392 of the previously cited article.

⁴⁰ See previously cited Tanaka article.

⁴¹ Please refer to pp. 36–44 of Murai's essay, mentioned in my supplementary notes.

vertical status relations within the system are organized by this Purity↔Pollution dynamic, the status system is clearly influenced by this concentric spread at the regional level and by the oppositional relationship between Purity and Pollution, and thus does not stop or reject the incorporation the “outside,” other ethnic groups or other collectives at the periphery or on the borders of the status system. In other words, the structure of the status system encompasses the entirety of the concentric Purity ↔ Pollution opposition.⁴²

The fourth point in need of making is that the “Sacred” collectives, positioned in contradistinction to the “Mundane,” occupy a position of great importance in the medieval period. To the left-hand side of the central axis organized by the figures of the emperor and the leper lies the status order organizing the domain of the “Sacred,” while to the right lies the status order organizing the domain of the “Mundane.” The former can be roughly partitioned into two categories: “learned monks” (*gakuryō* 学侶), including among others the *monzēki* 門跡, the aristocrats within the temple precincts, and “low-ranking monks” (*dōshū* 堂衆), with *shimo-bōshi* 下法師 and *shimobe* 下部 filling out the lowest rungs. This domain is ordered by the sacerdotal ranks and titles subtended at the state level, and as is well known from the *Kōan reiseisu* 弘安礼節, sees the “Mundane” and “Sacred” reciprocally establish correspondence between the coordinates of their relative status systems.⁴³

However, the world of Monks or *sōryō* is not simple.⁴⁴ While informed by the domain of Persons or *hito*, one must keep in mind the slippages between it and the mundane realm (This, however, is not a problem that can readily be resolved here. It will first be necessary to clarify the status relations and rankings within individual temples, then expand one’s analysis to whole regions or sects to ascertain the relative rank of specific temples. Only then can one begin to have a sense of the status organization of the Monk or *sōryō* category at the state level.).

The fifth point to be made regards the shrine-workers, mediums, *kugonin*, and

⁴² From this perspective, the conceptual connections between the sort of attitude evinced towards non-person *hi’nin* as “unclean,” and those held toward the Ezo 蝦夷 will require careful evaluation.

⁴³ For more on the *Kōan reiseisu*, see Tanaka (p. 29) and Takahashi (p. 317).

⁴⁴ “Learned monks” were divided into monks of aristocratic origin and common monks, with the former being made up of those of the fifth rank or higher, and some of high-ranking samurai status. From cases in which one knows the class background of the *dōshū* or lower-ranking monks, they tended to be of middle-to-low samurai rank. By contrast *shimo-bōshi* and *gebu* shaved their heads, but were not official monks, and took care of menial tasks within the temple—one could consider them the peasants or commoners of the temple. Seen from this perspective, the “learned monks” correspond to the aristocratic classes in the domain of Persons or *hito*, while *dōshū* correspond to the samurai class, and the *shimo-bōshi* and *shimobe*, to the commoner classes. However, there is a degree of clear slippage between these categories. Further investigation is required to the ends of a better understanding of the factors informing the status order within religious institutions.

niebito, among others. They have their own specific lateral affiliation informed by the type and mode of their profession and are incorporated into the administrative bodies of the powerful ruling authorities; somewhat later, historically speaking, the professional or guild-like aspect specific to them will become increasingly clear.⁴⁵

The sixth point to be made is that, as can be readily observed should one understand our model as a compound body of fusiform social collectives, there are myriad spaces and interstices between and at the edges of the plurality of fusiform units forming the whole. In these spaces operate the social collectives of the non-person *hi'nin*, but they too form their own individual collectives and groups particular to them.⁴⁶

By incorporating these various conditions, our schema of the medieval status system perforce adopts a fusiform morphology; within it, fusiform social collectives both great and small stand in relationships of reciprocal opposition and co-dependence, enfolding each other or overlapping in various ways. The exogenic positions of these fusiform social collectives are endogenically arranged at once by the system of court (or sacerdotal) ranks and titles, produced with the opposition of Purity and Pollution centered on the emperor as well as the authority of the throne as its central axis, and by the geographical or spatial opposition between Purity and Pollution centered on the capital. And, within the gaps between these fusiform social collectives, those that have elected to remove themselves from society, or those individuals or collectives that have fallen through or been left behind, are active on the peripheries and borders, either of the capital or further afield.

Figure 5 is the structural diagram described in the foregoing. One can only hope that it can perhaps serve some purpose as a reference.

In concluding, I would like to digress slightly and append some further explanation. In brief, what can be apprehended from a theological or sociological perspective as the tripartite structure of Cosmos (the Sacred), Nomos (the Mundane), and Chaos⁴⁷ can also be identified within this model. In other words, to the left one as Cosmos, the Sacred, to the right, Noumos, the Mundane, and at the very base, Chaos. However, while in principle this model should have three vertices, in our fusiform diagram of the medieval status order, the vertices of Cosmos and Nomos converge at the apex, while Chaos is positioned diametri-

⁴⁵ Since the goal of this paper has been to elaborate a model of the medieval status system, there has been no diachronic analysis of the developmental process of the status system. This will be a task for the future.

⁴⁶ For more on the hierarchies of these groups, see “Illustrated Picture Scrolls as Historical Documents and the Medieval Status System,” also contained in this volume.

⁴⁷ Kimura Yōji's 木村洋二 chapter “Shōchō-teki sekai no yonkyoku kōzō moderu” 象徴的世界の四極構造モデル, *Warai no shakaigaku* 笑いの社会学. Tokyo: Sekai Shisōsha, 1983, interestingly interprets the Sacred as a “superstructure” or potential that produces “structure” and therefore “order.”

while its symbolic pole may be located at the very terminus of the status system, Chaos nevertheless may lurk anywhere within those interstices—such as the liminal spaces of the public roads or riverbanks—at the Cosmic and Nomic peripheries.

Supplementary Note:

The latter half of this chapter consists of new material. That being said, it is not informed by more recent findings, but rather is the result of the reworking and reorganization of a draft wrote concomitantly with the composition of the first half. That draft was to have been completed and to have appeared as “Some Additional Notes on the Medieval Status System” in the magazine *Jinmin no reki-shi-gaku*, but at about the same time I found myself in the position of having to prepare the keynote address at the conference hosted by the Historical Science Society of Japan (contained in this volume as “Epidermal Sensation and Fear in the Common People of the Middle Ages”), and lacked either the time or energy to complete it. But, as the first half was going to be included in this monograph, I no option but to finish the second half. I thought about rewriting the entire thing, but if I were to have done so, it would have ill-fit with the first half. Therefore, I only went so far as to put the argument from the original draft in better order. For that reason, one could say that there isn’t much in the way of new material to be found in the latter half, but such was necessary for the completion of the essay and its argument. As a result, however, I have been reminded of the urgent need for a more rigorous and thoroughgoing engagement with the study of status, and hope to fill in some of the blank in future work.

When revising an older manuscript, however, it is hard to keep one’s later reading from finding its way into one’s work. I have tried to mark such places with additional footnotes, but I am unsure whether this has been sufficient. For that reason, I list here those papers published in the interim that I myself found to be important.

- a) Arashiro Moriaki 安良城盛昭, “Mibun narabi ni mibun-sei ni tsuite no rironteki sho mondai” 身分ならびに身分制についての理論的諸問題, in *Nihon hōken shakai seiritsuron* 日本封建社会成立論, vol.1, postscript. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983.
- b) Takahashi Masaaki 高橋昌明, “Chūsei no mibun-sei” 中世の身分制, in *Kōza Nihon rekishi* 講座日本歴史, volume 3, chūsei 1. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1984.
- c) Koyama Yasunori 小山靖憲, “Chūsei no senminsei” 中世の賤民制, in *Kōza Nihon rekishi* 講座日本歴史, volume 4, chūsei 2. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1985.

- d) Yokota Fuyuhiko 横田冬彦, “Kinsei no mibunsei” 近世の身分制, in *Kōza Nihon rekishi* 講座日本歴史, volume 5, kinsei 1. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1985.
- e) Murai Shōsuke 村井章介, “Chūsei Nihon rettō no chiiki kūkan to kokka” 中世日本列島の地域空間と国家, *Shisō*, June 1985.

All of the above are rich works of scholarship, but I will refrain from further commentary here, and instead, as stated above, will continue my process of digestion. Finally, I would like express my sincerest apologies to the editorial department of *Jinmin no rekishigaku* for having failed to complete the second half of this chapter until the present, as well as for having put it to print—the sloth of the author is the blame on both accounts.